



County of San Diego

LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT GROUP

CHANDRA L. WALLAR
DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1600 Pacific Highway, Room 212, San Diego, CA 92101
(619) 531-6256
Fax: (619) 531-5476
www.sdcountry.ca.gov/lueg

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TO: Supervisor Dianne Jacob, Chairwoman
Supervisor Pam Slater-Price, Vice Chairwoman
Supervisor Greg Cox
Supervisor Ron Roberts
Supervisor Bill Horn

FROM: Chandra L. Wallar
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

SAN DIEGO COUNTY FARMING PROGRAM PLAN

Agriculture is the fifth largest industry sector in San Diego County contributing significantly to the local economy. Measures to facilitate farming add to the vitality of the industry. In support of agriculture, on May 11, 2005 (8), the Board of Supervisors approved Policy I-133, Support and Encouragement of Farming in San Diego County.

As a first major step in implementing the Board policy, the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) has developed the San Diego County Farming Program Plan (Plan). The Plan reflects input from the agricultural community on ways the County can improve processes and policies related to the agricultural industry. The Plan outlines the framework for a more positive and supportive environment for agriculture in San Diego County, and supports the implementation of four major initiatives:

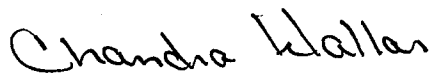
- 2007 Farm Bill: The Plan supports reform of the 2007 Federal Farm Bill such as recommendations to expand and improve the Environmental Quality Initiative Program, increase funding to the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, reform the Conservation Security Program, reform Research Title VII, expand Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act programs, authorize state coordinated conservation plans, and expand the Wildlife Habitats Incentives Programs.
- Regulatory Permit Process: The Plan outlines ways to improve the regulatory processes such as streamlining the permit process where possible, designating a single point of contact in the County's permit department who can answer farm-focused questions, and creating a permit process map that would aid farmers.
- Agricultural Industry Development: The Plan encourages the establishment of a private or non-profit Agricultural Industry Development (AID) program to supply expertise, resources, and new ideas to support agriculture. The AID program would promote farm leadership, create opportunities for young farmers, and improve the economic sustainability of San Diego County agriculture.

- Purchase of Agriculture Conservation Easements (PACE): PACE programs are voluntary programs that compensate agricultural landowners for restricting non-farm development on their farms. The purpose of the PACE program is to protect the farmland in the county in perpetuity for agriculture, maintain affordable farming, support farmers' equity, and protect critical habitat for regional conservation.

To date, DPLU has identified a single point of contact within the department to address agricultural related land use questions from farmers. Also, progress has been made to further improve the regulatory process. On December 10, 2008 (3) the Board adopted amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that allows 'by-right' farmers markets in the unincorporated county. DPLU will continue to seek ways to improve and streamline land use regulations and permit review processes for agricultural related activities as funding and resources become available.

If I can be of further assistance, please contact me or Jeff Murphy, DPLU Deputy Director at (858) 694-3765.

Respectfully,



CHANDRA L. WALLAR
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer